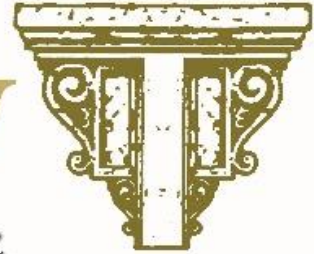


March 2014

# Monroe County History Center

Where the past and present meet.



## News from the Library Online Edition

Dear Hillary,

Welcome to the March 2014 edition of the Monroe County History Center's online version of News from the Library.

In the last two months the library has been working with new volunteers, assisting with the History Center's annual gala, and collaborating with the public library and Indiana University on various projects.

Comments to the newsletter are welcome and may be emailed to [mchclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:mchclibrary@gmail.com). Thank you for your support of the Monroe County Historical Society.

Best Wishes,  
Nicole Bieganski  
Research Library Manager  
Monroe County History Center

### *In This Issue*

[Featured Resource: Monroe County Estray Book B](#)

[Article: "Are You Mickey Mouse? and Other Questions to Help You in the Archives"](#)

[Online e-Newsletter Archive](#)

["Like" the Library on Facebook](#)

[African American History Guides](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Become a Member](#)

### *Featured Resource:* **Red Bull and Natural Trotters: A Monroe County Estray Book**

Among the county resources housed in the archive room of the research library, documents assistant Beth Lau recently uncovered Monroe County Estray Book B (1833-1846). Between beautiful green covers etched with hand-drawn designs, the 8" x 12.5" volume holds information about what Monroe County residents of the past considered valuable property.

According to the Indiana Historical Society, an estray book "lists stray animals collected by individuals in the county and reported to county officials." Monroe County Estray Book B fits this definition, listing descriptions of animals found wandering the county by concerned citizens. While the book has obvious genealogical value (since it notes the names of the individuals who recovered the animals, as well as the names of the county officials who received the reports), it's also valuable to the researcher seeking to discern a more nearly complete picture of what life in Monroe County was

### e-Newsletter Archive

Searching for information from a past newsletter or trying to remember something you read in a past e-newsletter article?

You now can find all editions of the library's e-newsletter in an [online archive, available on the History Center's website](#).

Hover over the Research Library tab on the Center's homepage and select "Library e-newsletter Archive."

like during the 19th century.

Below are two descriptions of stray animals recorded in Book B. While some descriptions in the estray book are technical and uniform, others list more specific characteristics of animals. For example, one of the entries below notes that the stray is a "natural trotter."

### "Red Bull

Taken up Hubbard Sharp living in Beanblossom [sic] Township Monroe County Indiana one red bull marked with a smooth crop off the Left ear and under bib in the right ear supposed to be two years old no maks [sic] or Brand perceivable appraised to four dollars & fifty cents by John Cox."

### "Chestnut Sorrel Horse

Taken up by Thomas Renshaw living in Indian Creek Township Monroe County Indiana one Chestnut Sorrel Horse four years old about fifteen hands and one inch high [illegible] face white hind feet, also his righ [sic] forefoot white, one white spot on his back, shod before, a natural trotter, no other marks or brands perceivable. Appraised to \$40.00 by Moses Hall and Daniel Hall. Posted before me on the 29th of August 1834. James Crane, J.P."



Monroe County Estray Book B, Monroe County History Center Research Library, Archive Room (Closet)

## "Like" the library on Facebook!



The Monroe County History Center Research Library is now on Facebook. [Follow this link to "Like" the page](#) and keep up with the latest news from the library. Or, view photos of library programs, newly-discovered resources, and more.

Also "Like" the [History Center's main page](#).

## New African American History Guides

In honor of African American History Month (February 2014), the research library developed and published new African American history resources on its webpages.

To search an index of Monroe County African American names and subjects, search the index on the library's "Indexes and Resources" page, available [here](#). The index corresponds to a binder of newspaper clipping photocopies from the 1850s-1930s, all relating to African American history in the county.

The research library also published a brochure, available at the History Center and [online](#), that guides genealogists researching their African

## "Are You Mickey Mouse?" and Other Questions to Help You in the Archives

"Do I need to wear gloves?" This question is second on the list of most-frequently-asked at the research library; the only question posed more often (it seems, at least) is: "Do you have (*fill in the blank*) records here?" The glove query is a good one, provoking discussion about archival standards and engaging a larger conversation about best museum practices.

In this article, I will share the practices favored by the Monroe County History Center Research Library, relating them to the methods proffered by scholars and museum professionals. Hopefully this exploration will leave you with a better understanding of the library's operations as well as a broader knowledge of the state of the museum and archival fields in 2014.

Before delving into specific methods, it is useful to establish basic definitions of preservation vocabulary. While the term "preservation" has varied in usage and scope, it has a specific meaning within today's archival world. The Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover defines preservation as "the protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and that prevent loss of informational content" (Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2006, para. 3). By this definition, the Monroe County History Center Research Library could consider both its process of placing court records in acid free sleeves and its efforts to digitize 19th-century deed records "preservation" practices. The first practice minimizes physical deterioration while the second prevents information loss.

The definition of "conservation" (a term so closely related to preservation that the words often are used synonymously) can prove difficult to define. While many think conservation implies returning a damaged document to its (presumed) original state, the practice of conservation actually concerns maintaining the "usable condition" of resources (Genealogy and Local History Committee (ALA), 1992, para. 3). For example, an archival conservator may examine valuable resources periodically, ensuring that they remain in usable states. Perhaps the conservator will reinforce a feature of a resource that has the potential to become fragile but which has not deteriorated significantly at the time of inspection. In other words, while both terms point to the future, conservation focuses on the specific usable condition in the present moment. Preservation operates in the long term and large scale, concerning continued access to resources.

"Restoration" adds another layer of complexity to this already-complicated set of definitions. The Northeast Document Conservation Center states that "treatment procedures intended to return cultural property to a known or assumed state" comprise restorative endeavors (Genealogy and Local History Committee (ALA), 1992, para. 3). Many often regard the restoration process as conservation, a perception enforced because professional "conservators" perform restoration tasks. And indeed, it can be correct to define the term in this way, depending on the resource and repository in question. In general, it is useful to think about conservation as a field of maintenance, and restoration as a field of significant treatment and change--altering a resource so that it more closely indicates its original condition and purpose.

How, then, can museum and archival staff and volunteers enact these practices? Let us begin answering that question by returning to the topic of glove usage...

A general consensus of professionals (see: Misperceptions about white gloves

American family history locally and nationally. The City of Bloomington MLK Commission and Second Baptist Church also distribute the brochure.

### ***Upcoming Events***

#### **-- "Researching Just for the Fun of It" (Genealogy Group Meeting)**

Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.  
Monroe County History Center

Ron Marquardt, local history researcher and former 40-year engineer with the Monon Railroad, will present a local history talk entitled "Researching Just for the Fun of It." Free CDs, booklets of Ron's talk, and desserts will be provided.

#### **-- Monroe County History Center Exhibits**

New this March in the Brown Gallery:

#### **"Cracking the Code: Quilt Patterns in the mid-1800s."**

In the education room:  
Exhibit cases in honor of **Ross Lockridge**

Exhibitions designed, researched, and installed by Monroe County History Center Exhibits Manager, Jenny Mack.

#### **-- Genealogy Group Meeting**

Thursday, May 1, 7 p.m.  
Monroe County History Center

Library Assistant Lee Ehman will present about using the research library's church history database and other research topics. More information to follow.

and Gloves off over Trinity's way to preserve manuscripts), argue that requiring staff and patrons to use white gloves while handling historical documents is an archaic and even harmful practice. Scholars suspect that the practice arose in the age of aristocratic rare book collectors like Nicolas Fouquet who kept "a pile of white gloves in the anti-room [sic] of his library" (Baker & Silverman, 2005, p. 7). Such Fouquet-ian enforcement of white glove policy, current scholars argue, "divorces them [patrons and archivists] from the articles they are handling" (Baker & Silverman, p.7). Furthermore, "gloves are as easily soiled as bare hands" and transmit "grime to the paper being handled" through the cotton's porous texture (Baker & Silverman, p. 4.) In accordance with these perspectives, the Monroe County History Center Research Library does not require white gloves when handling original records.

Do I need to wear gloves in the archives?



CC 2014 Rebecca Goldman  
Derangement and Description  
derangementanddescription.wordpress.com

Click [here](#) to view a larger version of this flowchart, provided by Lou Malcomb.

What about other accepted archival standards? Do they have the potential to cause harm, like gloves do? The answer depends on the case, but, in general, glove usage seems to be the most misunderstood archival practice. For example, the "pencils only" rule of archives is well understood and unlikely to change. The reason for this policy is obvious: Pencil marks are erasable; pen marks are permanent. In fact, some repositories even pencil-mark valuable resources with their archival identifiers, lightly writing the numbers directly onto the item. In the research library, we do allow pens, simply because not all of our materials are rare. However, pencils are necessary in place of pens when patrons are working with original county records.

As any archivist or scrapbooker knows, acid free supplies are another "must" and are unlikely to be ousted in white-glove manner. Storing resources in acid-free housing (such as archival boxes, folders, or envelopes) is a measure of both preservation and conservation. Resources themselves are acidic, a

**-- Preservation Workshop**

Saturday, May 3, 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Monroe County History Center

Join History Center staff and community members for an afternoon of preservation education and consultation.

Doug Sanders, Paper Conservator at Indiana University's Paper Conservation Lab will begin the afternoon with a presentation.

After the talk, community members are invited to bring their family heirlooms to preservation consultation booths in the education room. Professionals from area museums will staff the booths, offering preservation advice.

**Become a member today!**

The Monroe County Historical Society supports itself through members like you! Some of the benefits of membership include:

- free admission to the museum
- 10% discount in the museum store
- Bimonthly issues of *Monroe County Historian*
- Special members-only events

**Levels:**  
**Student/Teacher \$20**  
**Basic \$35**  
**Family \$60**  
**Sustaining \$100**  
**Patron \$500**

To become a member or

condition based on their composition. The wood pulp used to make many papers and the chemicals used in certain inks are inherently acidic. Only expensive deacidification processes can rectify their condition to a basic state (a process which many archival budgets cannot accommodate).

Steps can still be taken, however, against acidity--or, as the Archives Association of British Columbia calls it, "the worst enemy of archival materials" (Archives Association of British Columbia, 1999, p. 60). The Monroe County History Center Research Library, for example, rehouses its probate records in individual acid-free folders from [archivalmethods.com](http://archivalmethods.com). Those folders then are placed in acid-free document boxes, also from Archival Methods. The library keeps its court records in acid-free envelopes from Kelco Industries; those envelopes reside in acid-free "Bankers Box"-style containers.

Food and drink policies are one last aspect of archival practice that remain fairly constant despite a recent surge of debate. In general, any use of food or drink that a reading room supervisor deems, on a case-by-case basis, "excessive" is not allowed. While many university libraries allow both food and drink (so that students can snack during long study sessions), most archives allow no food or drink. Food can not only spill on valuable items, it can attract document-damaging pests. Food is prohibited in the Monroe County History Center Research Library, but covered beverages are allowed. However, library staff and volunteers have the right to stop excessive behavior. For example, a capped water bottle poses a low risk, but a thermos of coffee being sipped over a 19th-century document should not be allowed.

While this article by no means addresses every archival practice, policy, and issue, it hopefully offers an overview of the current state of the field. And, perhaps it clarifies Monroe County History Center Research Library policies, or explains why it adopted the rules it enforces. The goal of all museum, library, and archival best practices is the preservation of historical resources held in the public trust for educational and enrichment purposes. Periodically re-evaluating and reviewing these policies helps staff and patrons ensure that they are acting responsibly to further that mission.

-- Nicole Bieganski

---

#### References and Works Consulted:

[Archives Association of British Columbia. \(1999\). A manual for small archives. Retrieved from http://aabc.ca/media/6069/manualforsmallarchives.pdf.](http://aabc.ca/media/6069/manualforsmallarchives.pdf)

[Baker, C. & Silverman, R. \(2005\). Misperceptions about white gloves. \*International Preservation News\*, 37. Retrieved from http://archive.ifla.org/V1/4/news/ipnn37.pdf.](http://archive.ifla.org/V1/4/news/ipnn37.pdf)

[Cheradame, H. \(2009\). Some progress toward a multifunctional mass deacidification process. \*International Preservation News\*, 48. Retrieved from http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipn/48-august-2009.pdf.](http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipn/48-august-2009.pdf)

[Colin, C. \(2006, September 17\). Gloves off over Trinity's way to preserve manuscripts. \*Sunday Times\*. Retrieved from http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world\\_news/article171263.ece.](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world_news/article171263.ece)  
[Genealogy and Local History Committee of the History Section of the Reference and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association \(2014\). Guidelines for preservation, conservation, and restoration of local history and local genealogical materials. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinespreservation.](http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinespreservation)

[Northeast Document Conservation Center \(2006\). What is preservation? Retrieved from http://unfacilitated.preservation101.org/session1/expl\\_what-is-definitions.asp.](http://unfacilitated.preservation101.org/session1/expl_what-is-definitions.asp)

**receive more  
information on  
membership, please  
email Hillary Detty at  
admin@monroehistory.org**

## **Funding Received!**

In February, the research library received requested funding from the Indiana Genealogical Society.

The funds will assist with the hiring of a library science student to process and digitize the research library's collection of oral histories.

To opt out of future newsletters, please email [mchclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:mchclibrary@gmail.com).